



**Metropolitan King County Council
Growth Management and Natural Resources Committee**

Staff Report

Agenda Item No.	3	Staff	Megan Smith
Ordinance No.	2006-0293	Date	July 11, 2006
Attending	Mark Isaacson, Director, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD)		

Steve Bleifuhs, Managing Supervisor, River and Floodplain Management Unit, WLRD

Grover Cleveland, Government Affairs Officer,
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
(DNRP)

SUBJECT

AN ORDINANCE relating to river and floodplain management, adopting the 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan as a functional plan of the King County Comprehensive Plan; and amending Ordinance 11112, Section 1, and K.C.C. 20.12.480.

SUMMARY

This ordinance would adopt the 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan (Flood Plan) as a Functional Plan, replacing the 1993 King County Flood Hazard Reduction Plan. The plan includes guiding policies, recommended countywide projects and programs, basin-specific projects and programs, cost-estimates for priority projects, and a funding chapter that recommends creation of a Countywide Flood Control Zone District (FCZD). The plan identifies total project and program needs ranging from \$179 million to \$335 million. The total for completing status-quo plus “enhanced” projects (those identified as representing the absolute minimum level needed to significantly reduce flood risks to regional economy, transportation corridors, and public and private property) is estimated at \$179 million (\$205 million when annualized over a 10-year period, accounting for 2.5 percent annual inflation).

BACKGROUND

King County manages more than 500 flood control facilities throughout incorporated and unincorporated King County. These facilities include both flood containment levees and bank stabilization projects, and most were constructed decades ago. King County has experienced seven federally-declared flood disasters since 1990. The county has more than 25,000 acres within the mapped, 100-year floodplain, or more than 40-square miles. There are more than 2,000 structures within the mapped floodplain, with an assessed valuation of \$2.7 billion. Because river channels migrate during floods, property and structures outside the mapped floodplain can also be at risk.

King County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System. Based on its regulations, projects, and programs, King County is the number-one rated county in the country, and as a result, county residents qualify for a 35 percent discount on their flood insurance. Despite this high rating, King County has a major backlog of maintenance and capital projects. One the Green River, the federal government is considering decertification of the flood control levees.

Flood hazard management programs and projects along major river systems in King County are currently funded by three local revenue sources: the River Improvement Fund Levy (a property tax collected countywide), the Green River FCZD levy (a property tax collected within the boundaries of the Green River FZCD), and the Intercounty River Improvement Fund levy (a property tax collected on properties within the Intercounty River Improvement District along the White River). These three sources together generated \$3.5 million in 2005. The Flood Plan projects that an annual revenue stream of \$17.9 to \$33.5 million would be needed to fund identified projects over a ten-year time frame.

Chapter 7 of the Flood Plan reviews a number of funding options, and recommends a Countywide FCZD as the most appropriate funding mechanism to support regional flood hazard management projects. FCZDs can levy an assessment of up to 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, subject to levy limits (FCZDs are relatively low on the levy hierarchy).

Creation of a Countywide FCZD would require a series of steps and adoption of separate legislation by the Council. The committee will be reviewing companion “notice of intent” legislation today (Proposed Ordinance 2006-0305) that would initiate consideration of the Countywide FCZD as a funding mechanism.

The transmittal letter for the notice of intent ordinance states that the Executive is not proposing a specific funding level at this time, but notes that collection of adequate revenue to fund the priority projects over a ten-year period would cost the owner of a \$300,000 home approximately \$15 per year.

PLAN OVERVIEW

The Growth Management and Natural Resources Committee will be reviewing the Flood Plan in detail over the coming months, and today’s meeting will include an initial briefing on the plan from Executive Staff.

The following highlights information that may be of particular interest as the committee begins its review:

Citizen Review

Advice on development of the plan came from a 13-member citizen’s advisory committee that met over an 18-month period. Committee members are listed on p. ii of the Flood Plan. A detailed description of public involvement in plan development is found on pp. 14 – 25 in Appendix A, and in Attachment 4 to this staff report.

Plan Goals, Guiding Principles, and Geographic Scope

Plan goals and guiding principles are found in Chapter 1.

The three goals of the plan are:

1. To reduce the risks from flood and channel migration hazards.
2. To avoid or minimize the environmental impacts of flood hazard management.
3. To reduce the long-term costs of flood hazard management.

Specific objectives and guiding principles to implement these goals are detailed on pp. 2 – 5.

King County has historically maintained facilities and provided flood warning services along the major rivers throughout the county, regardless of jurisdiction, and the geographic scope of the Flood Plan includes all incorporated and unincorporated areas of King County. The focus of the plan is to address flood hazards associated with King County’s six major river systems, which are the South

Fork Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Sammamish, Cedar, Green, and White Rivers, and their significant tributaries, the Tolt, Raging, Miller, and Greenwater Rivers. The Flood Plan also addresses flood hazards along other tributaries and small streams, including those with existing flood protection facilities like Tokul Creek, Kimball Creek, Coal Creek (in Upper Snoqualmie Basin), Issaquah Creek, Fifteen-Mile Creek, and Holder Creek.

The plan is intended to complement activities of the King County Stormwater Program, which address more localized flooding and impacts from stormwater runoff. See p. 5 for more information on plan scope.

Plan Policies

Guiding policies for the Flood Plan, including project prioritization policies, are found in Chapter 2.

Overview of Flooding In King County, Including Information on Past Damages

Information on flood history, including information on acreage in the floodplain and damages during past flood disasters, is found in Chapter 3 (see pp. 27 – 30).

River Basin Descriptions and Project Needs

Detailed descriptions of basin conditions, facilities, flooding problems, and program and project needs are found in Chapter 5. Council districts are identified for each project. This section also includes proposals for countywide projects and programs. The tables summarizing project needs include a breakout for ten-year costs for status-quo projects (assuming a continuation of current funding) and enhanced projects. A color map showing project locations is provided for each river basin.

Project Needs and Funding

Chapter 7 provides information on existing funding authorities and current revenues for flood hazard management, along with annualized cost estimates for implementing a status-quo program vs. an enhanced program (see Table 7-6 on p. 317). The total cost implementing both status-quo and enhanced projects and programs over a 10-year timeframe is \$179 million, or \$205 million when annualized to account for 2.5 percent annual inflation. This chapter also describes potential new and enhanced local funding options, and recommends creation of a Countywide FCZD.

The “enhanced” projects represent those that are most essential to reducing flood risks to regional economy, transportation corridors, and public and private property. Additional projects, potentially bringing the total need to \$335 million (including status-quo and enhanced projects), are identified in Appendix G.

Summary of Action Plan

Appendix F provides a summary of recommended 10-year countywide and basin-specific actions.

ORDINANCE PROVISIONS – RELATIONSHIP TO THE KING COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Proposed Ordinance 2006-0293 would adopt the 2006 Flood Plan as a Functional Plan to guide King County’s river and floodplain management programs and to meet the intent of the natural environment, and facilities and services policies of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

Under King County Code Chapter 20.08.132, “Functional Plans” are “detailed plans for facilities and action plans for other governmental activities. Functional plans should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, define service levels, define standards, specify financing methods which are adequate, stable, and equitable, be the basis for scheduling facilities and services through capital improvement programs and plan for facility maintenance. Functional plans are not adopted to be part of the capital facilities plan element of the Comprehensive Plan.”

The Flood Plan has been developed to be consistent with existing Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations (like critical areas regulations) and adoption of the Flood Plan should not trigger substantive amendments to Comprehensive Plan policies or amendments to existing regulations. Needed Comprehensive Plan policy amendments are limited to technical changes to update references to the updated Flood Plan. These technical amendments are included in one of the 2006 Annual Comprehensive Plan Update ordinances now pending before full Council. Should the Flood Plan not be adopted prior to full Council action on the 2006 Annual Comprehensive Plan Update ordinances, the references to the new plan name would need to be removed during full Council action.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Ordinance 2006-0293 without attachment (each member has received a copy of the Executive Proposed 2006 Flood Hazard Management Plan, a hard copy is on file with the Clerk's Office, and the document is available on line at www.dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/flood/fhrpupdate.htm)
2. Transmittal Letter for Proposed Ordinance 2006-0293
3. Fiscal Note for Proposed Ordinance 2006-0293
4. Public Participation Process